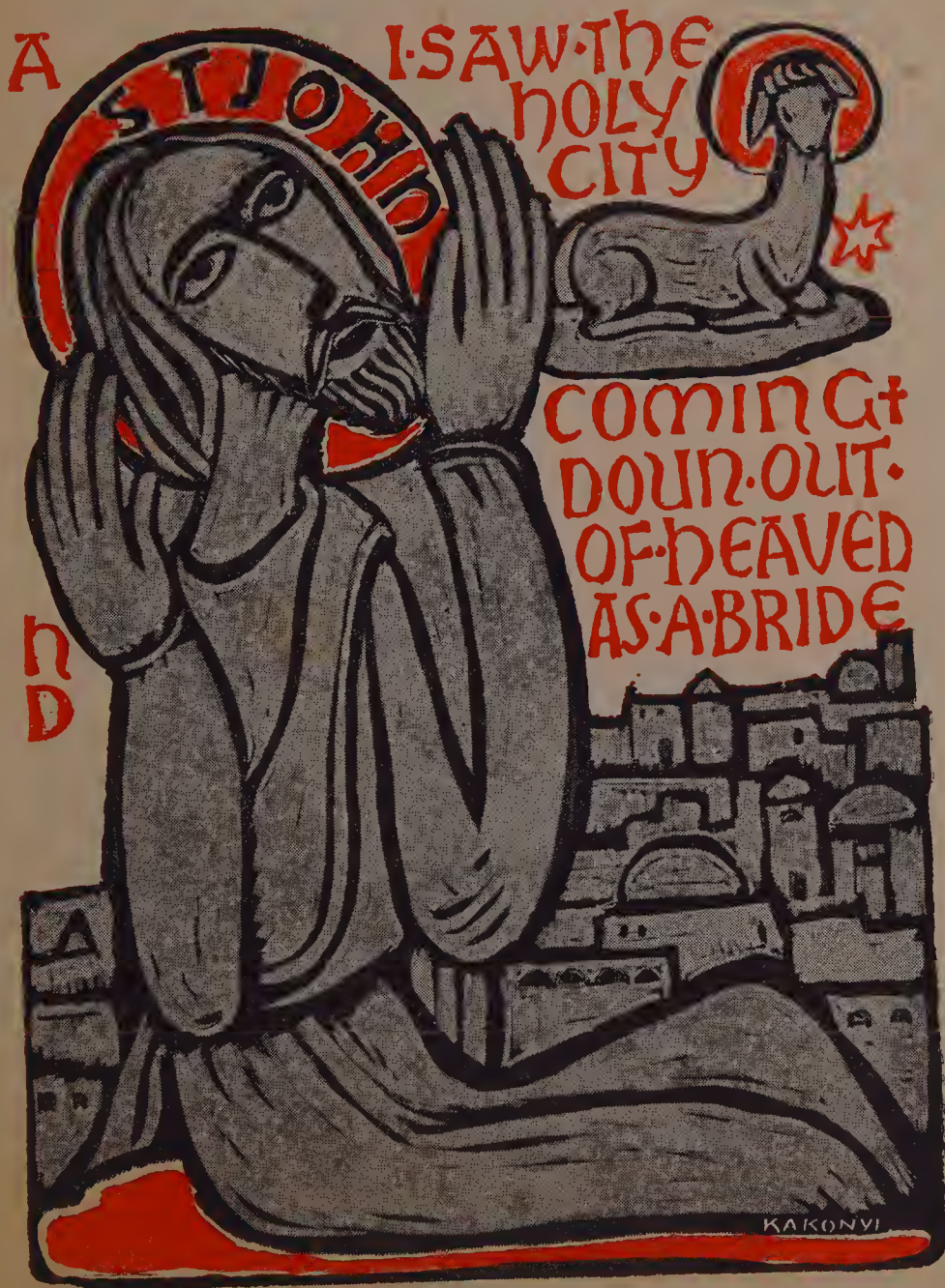


SPONSA REGIS

25-2



A SPIRITUAL REVIEW FOR SISTERS

October
1953

SPONSA REGIS

is a spiritual review for all Sisterhoods, published monthly, with ecclesiastical approval, by monks of St. John's Abbey, at Collegeville, Minnesota.

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OUR COVER DESIGN represents St. John the Evangelist in his vision, as he beheld the Heavenly Jerusalem, the "Bride of the Lamb", descending from God to man on earth. That symbol also stands for each consecrated spouse of Christ in religion.

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SPONSA REGIS

OCT., 1953 VOL. XXV, NO. 2

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF SPONSA REGIS
(1928-1953)

NEED AND FULFILLMENT

SPONSA REGIS is the first spiritual review published in the interests of English-speaking Sisterhoods, wherever they live and labor and, in particular, of those in the United States and Canada. Before its first appearance a quarter of a century ago, many a Sister leading the contemplative life in her cloister or being active in the missions, in schools, hospitals, orphanages, houses for the aged and neglected, had longed for the day when a monthly copy of a review she might call her own would reach her as a welcome aid on the path to religious perfection.

It was evident that a vast amount of good would accrue to many thousands of souls from the devout reading of such a spiritual monthly review. Religious vocations would be aroused, strengthened and maintained, and even the children taught by the religious, or the sick and infirm under their care, would greatly be benefited, at least indirectly, by the intensified spiritual and religious living that was bound to follow in the wake of the publication.

Bishops, priests, and religious superiors, likewise, had long felt that a review for our many Sisterhoods would be most welcome and fill a gap in the lists of our Catholic periodicals. When in the early part of 1928 the Bishops, the major superiors of religious communities, and the editors of Catholic papers and periodicals of the United States and Canada received a letter announcing that in September the first monthly review for Sisters under the title *Sponsa Regis* would make its appearance, letters began to

come in from all sides giving the newly contemplated venture an enthusiastic welcome and pledging it full support. Subscriptions for motherhouses and dependent convents and individual religious were ordered at once. The first issue of *Sponsa Regis* came from the press of the Wanderer Publishing Company in St. Paul, Minnesota, in September 1928, with sixteen pages of solid reading matter, under the approval of Rt. Rev. Alcuin Deutsch, O.S.B., Superior of the editor, and of members of the hierarchy. In the following year the number of pages was raised to twenty-four. Considering the life of religious observance and the hard work generally incumbent on Sisters, this amount of solid and practical spiritual reading was adhered to till last year, when the twenty-eight page issue became necessary.

SCOPE

The Holy Year 1925 and, in particular, its crowning event, the institution of the feast of Christ the King, had given the first impetus toward the founding of the review, and even the selection of the title *Sponsa Regis*, Spouse of Christ the King, goes back to that year and feast. But two more years elapsed before the plan reached its fruition. Meanwhile the scope was worked out in regard to the coming review. As its title indicated, it must be the foremost endeavor of editor and contributors to spur their readers on to the closest imitation of Christ, their King and Spouse, following the example of Mary, Model of religious. This sublime and over-all program would call for intense spiritual living with Christ, that is, the cultivation of interior recollection consequent upon the realization of the special indwelling of the Triune God within the soul by sanctifying grace.

This interior living is, indeed, the shortest path leading to sanctity: Only truly recollected souls, moreover, are capable of efficaciously building up Christ's Kingdom on earth. Such exalted spiritual living must be the ambition of all religious in their endeavor to sanctify themselves and aid in the work of the apostolate of souls. At the same time, interior living is the great antidote to the baneful secularism, activism, mediocrity, and other anti-spiritual tendencies in fallen human nature. Imitation of and configuration to Christ, the Savior of souls and supreme Victim for a sinful mankind, calls for intense sacrificial living with Him on behalf of the countless souls who do not know Him or refuse to follow Him.

Such victim living with Christ does not consist in imposing all sorts of sufferings upon oneself, but it rather comprises the vast number of sacrifices, self-denials, and intense efforts that are required on the part of generous souls who wish to establish themselves in interior recollection. Religious, in virtue of their vows and dedicated life in communities and the apostolate, are called to be among the closest followers of their divine King and Spouse, hence are expected to live the victim life with Christ. These fundamental truths and facts have for years been stressed in the pages of *Sponsa Regis*. Still more: books, pamphlets, and leaflets have been published to encourage religious in adopting victim living, e.g., *The Guide for Victim Souls*, *The Call for Victim Souls*, *Way of Victimhood in the Sacred Heart*, and others. As a result, many thousands of *Sponsa Regis* readers have embraced the victim life and are experiencing its wonderful effects in bringing about a more intimate union with Christ, their Spouse and King.

SCOPE EXTENDED

Intensification of the readers' spirituality by due emphasis on *ascetical or victim living* characterizes the initial phase of *Sponsa Regis* endeavor. This must ever be so, for fallen human nature is powerfully drawn to mediocrity, self-seeking, and immortification. The spiritual life, that is, Christ's life in the soul, calls for a thorough purification from all that is opposed to the divine will. Once the soul is well on the way of this cleansing process, the Holy Spirit is ready to begin His work of enlightening the soul and leading it on to gradually increasing intimacy with Christ, King and Spouse. On this way to higher degrees of perfection the religious is given a new incentive and impetus, when it is made to realize the sanctifying effects of thorough *liturgical* living. Having been purified in some degree, it is enabled to see the necessity of intimate living with the Church, Christ's Mystical Body, and of becoming an ever more sanctified member of the eternal King and Spouse. Intense sharing in the Church's sacred Liturgy will henceforth be one of its preoccupations. For this reason *Sponsa Regis*, although not professedly liturgical, endeavored to arouse in its patrons that interest in divine worship which becomes religious as privileged members of the Church. Ascetical or victim living joined to liturgical piety combine with mystical contemplation unto the highest goal of genuinely interior souls. A lively interest in this particular

sphere of spirituality has of late years been stimulated in many religious, and even in not a few members of the laity, through the publication and study of mystical works. It may truthfully be asserted that today the number of contemplative souls is on the increase. The more fervent readers of their review rightly will look forward to finding in its pages whatever practical knowledge might prepare them for the reception of the much cherished mystical graces. *Sponsa Regis* has not failed them in the past and will continue to give attention to mystical subjects in the future.

PRESENT STATUS

Considering the extensive spiritual program our Sisters' review has followed during the past twenty-five years, it is not to be wondered that its subscription list has neared the saturation point. Of eight thousand subscriptions to date the majority come from motherhouses and dependent convents, where the monthly copies are first read in public and then in private by individual Sisters and finally bound, so as to be available for reading to old and new members of the communities. Parents, brothers, sisters, and friends have for years been in the habit of subscribing to the periodical for the benefit of their beloved ones in religion. More prelates, priests, and lay persons are among the readers of the review than one would suspect. Victim Souls are far in excess of ten thousand.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sponsa Regis can boast of a host of clerical, religious, and lay promoters and friends. The following deserve special mention: The Rt. Rev. Abbots Alcuin Deutsch, O.S.B. (deceased), and Baldwin Dworschak, O.S.B., Rev. Rembert Bularzik, O.S.B., literary editor for many years; Ven. Brother Elmer, O.S.B., and his co-workers in the subscription department, the many contributors to the pages of the review and especially also the Rev. Paschal Botz, O.S.B., present editor since 1946 and his group of co-workers. We wish to add to these the former printers, The Wanderer Publishing Company of St. Paul.

SOULS IN PERIL

The mission of our Sisters' review is becoming more and more urgent as time goes on. Although there is a notable increase of religious vocations during the past decade, the opportunities for work in schools, hospitals, home and foreign missions have vastly

multiplied at the same time. The sublime spiritual program, as outlined in these pages and followed by *Sponsa Regis* during the past twenty-five years, is a guarantee that, with the special divine blessing, our Sisterhoods will continue their manifold activities on the same high level as heretofore, unto the greater honor and glory of God and the salvation and sanctification of ever greater numbers of souls.

Meire Grove, R. 2
P. O. Melrose, Minnesota

JOSEPH KREUTER, O.S.B.
Founding Editor, 1928 to 1946

ART AND BEATITUDE

ONE of the desires most deeply planted in the heart of man is that for the possession of beauty. Success in approaching this possession has been the gauge of civilization itself. Persons who contribute to the cultural or beauty-seeking deposit of man's heritage are esteemed beyond those who contribute to his governmental or scientific advancement. An ancient Chinese proverb, "I had two yen; with one I bought bread, and with the other hyacinths," shows how man throughout the ages has bowed to the necessity of preserving his physical or material nature, but realized that this was empty if beauty, the food for his soul and spirit, was lacking.

For the Christian this takes on deep significance. The non-Christian can seek to possess beauty by penetration of truth, intellectual richness and cultural sensitivity. He may seek beauty by way of goodness in wholesome and wholehearted living, by acting with integrity and honesty. He may seek it in a unified vision leading to breadth of understanding and significant action. However, in all these pursuits, no matter how close they bring him to beauty (emanating as it does from the true, the good, and the unified), his attachment of beauty would ultimately still be limited and peripheral. The Christian has all these means — culture, learning, civilization and unified action — but beyond them he has at his disposal the direct way of fulfilling the deepest yearning of his soul: through the sacramental system he comes into immediate contact with the One who is Truth, Goodness and One, and who is the Source of all beauty.

Now this is understandable in theory, but shifting into the realm of experience one wonders sometimes if all good Christians really do possess basic satisfaction and peace. Is there a sense of having come close to the Source of ultimate beauty, the total vision of which will constitute eternal beatitude? Restlessness, tension, dissatisfaction and an absence of peace and charity do not necessarily indicate a failure to receive from the Sacraments this intimate contact with God and His beauty. It might indicate that there is an area of experience between the highest powers of the soul and the practical actions and responses of daily life that is left undeveloped or under-developed. Then the soul's contact with Christ in the Sacraments has difficulty in seeping through to daily living to beautify it, to make it godlike. The very areas in which the non-Christian would pursue beauty — in intellectual, cultural or moral developments — lie in this medial area. If these are not formed in the Christian, their absence can and does hamper a daily living with Christ. Such a void may restrain the operation of grace which often requires a response to its impulse in one of these areas.

Art lies in this medial plane insofar as its contribution to the attainment of sanctity, the completion of one's being, is concerned. It is important for those seriously desiring to receive a fullness of beatitude in eternity to expand their capacity for it in time by what art has to offer, since it is that earthly pursuit which is primarily concerned with beauty. The contact of the soul with beauty in art prepares it to respond to more direct revelations of God's beauty.

Because religious art consists of material and yet is concerned with the expression of, or enhancing of, some immaterial reality, it is peculiarly suited to help bridge the span between the practical, animal life of man and his religious, spiritual life. It is not by chance that in the religious systems that are pre-Christian or non-Christian there will be found present a striking emphasis upon the role art plays in relation to religious worship. Even the Iconoclasts, who forbade the use of representative images, still developed one of the most distinctive and elaborate systems of artistic decoration history can reveal. From the Early Christian period on the Church has been associated with art, developing throughout the centuries many styles, diverse forms, and a variety which in itself bespeaks the universality of Christian expression and Christian

truth. The Christian truth expressed by Byzantine, Romanesque, Coptic, or Gothic art has remained the same. The manner of expressing this truth has varied to accommodate the period and locale. True tradition in Christian art has maintained what was expressed and why it was expressed, but the "how", the manner of expression, has varied. It has not been by chance that the artist, or his works, have been spoken of as being inspired, that the reference to the "divine muses" has been made, or that phrases indicating unearthly beauty or eternal beauty have been attributed to art works. Art approaches the threshold beyond which grace must lead.

Today art stands in a crucial relationship to the Church and to individual Christians. In general, art is not functioning as a beauty-revealing, a sanctifying source in 20th century Christianity. If one glances at the progress of culture through the past four hundred years, and considers the forces the Church had to cope with during the same period, the estrangement of wholesome and honest art from the Church and the consequent lack of appreciation of it by Christians can be understood. One must recognize a vacuum which is being filled with materialistic, weak and meaningless expressions. Satisfying neither the spirit nor the eye, these serve only to warp and limit the taste.

So there arises the problem of grappling with this situation on a practical, explicit, personal level here and now, and of burrowing through to a path leading to a solution. Today it is not uncommon to find a sincere and competent Christian artist having to be a crusader not against the infidels but against persons with serious religious intents. How unfortunate this is can be appreciated only when related to the theory presented earlier in this article, which suggested the spiritual role of religious art and what it has been throughout religious history in assisting the approach to personal sanctification. The plight of art today and the plight of many well meaning but artistically blinded Christians cannot be considered a trivial one. It is not a problem of personal tastes nor of specific aesthetic theories that warrants attention. These are minor and lack urgency in relation to the fact that an important and normal help to insight into God and union with Him is being blocked both by scarcity of penetrating and sound Christian art works and by lack of general appreciation and understanding of the works which do exist.

The resistance on the part of some of the group to whom the Christian art works are addressed is not necessarily due to the ill will of the individuals of the group, but to the unfortunately low grade of pseudo-religious art to which they have become accustomed. Anything more worthy and spiritual may easily be rejected not on an objective or significant point, but because of its unfamiliarity — its lack of conformity to a mediocre standard, or the absence of physical or material details. These persons would also find it hard to accept the Christian art produced during the golden ages of the faith: a Romanesque angel, a Byzantine Christus or a Gothic Last Judgment. Such works are too clear and strong for unweaned artistic appetites, yet they are sections of the Gospels strikingly translated into the language of vision. Blurred, sentimental Madonnas, plaster-cast, stereotyped saints portrayed in an artistic style of lower calibre than that of the illustrations in the *Saturday Evening Post*, and stale replicas of once-fresh masterpieces do not and cannot prepare one to recognize how radically unworthy for religious usage is an art style which would be unacceptable even in a middle-class restaurant.

To meet this tragic state and to guide the efforts to alleviate it, the Vatican has issued a decree ("Instruction to Ordinaries on 'Sacred Art' ", June 30, 1952) on the state of art in relation to the Church. To those who reject the usage of contemporary forms in religious art it indicates that these are desirable, quoting from the earlier *Mediator Dei* (Nov. 20, 1947):

It is eminently fitting that the art of our times have a free opportunity to serve the sacred edifices and sacred rites with due reverence and with due honor; so that it too may add its voice to the magnificent hymn of glory which men of high talent have sung throughout the passing centuries of the Catholic faith.

In the decree Pope Pius XII condemns the lifeless repetition of stereotyped figures and instructs local Ordinaries to "severely forbid second rate and stereotyped statues and effigies to be multiplied, and improperly and absurdly exposed." Throughout the decree His Holiness upholds the universality and vitality of the Church's art and recognizes the need for avoiding any static concept and inflexible norm. He urges a high calibre and honesty in religious art, leaving no doubt about the need and rightness of encouraging a good contemporary religious art. His limitations and

restrictions are drawn from the Councils of the Church and the Code of Canon Law, rather than from an adherence to former styles and manners.

To judge religious art works on the basis of how realistic they are, or worse still, how sweet or sentimental they are, is to judge them on the lowest and least relevant level. Sacred art is a visual expression of a spiritual concept and in religious art the spiritual content should predominate. A sentimental or "pretty" Madonna is a far cry from an adequate expression of the Mother of God, she who is above all creation, the Woman clothed with the Sun. When the lines and colors used to depict Our Lady are expressive of the peace and power that are hers as well as of her loving Motherhood, when her features and gestures are portrayed so as to communicate her penetration into eternity, her wisdom, or any of her other attributes, then a suitable portrayal of Mary will exist. The miraculous image of Our Lady of Guadalupe shows how she prefers to be painted. In that instance she chose to have herself portrayed in the artistic style then prevalent in Mexico and she chose the appearance of a Mexican lady even before that Spanish-Indian type had emerged. It appears she chose to be not only contemporary in her portrait, but somewhat ahead of the times. Works which show her as a pretty girl rendered inartistically and with no loftiness can hardly serve to stir up any spiritual insight. Instead of being a way to penetration into God and His creatures, such works are only detours into a comfortable sentiment.

Among the art forms becoming more and more familiar today in secular art many tend to stress spiritual values more than the material, the idea more than the surface appearance. Such styles are especially suitable for the expression of lofty subjects. Yet these forms are more common in magazines than in holy pictures. A person who demands good design in a car or a washing machine too often does not demand such a minimum requirement in religious statuary. For some the limits of the Christian artistic tradition extend only back to the Renaissance, whereas the art styles most completely abandoned to the liturgy and most concerned with revealing an immaterial reality were those from the fifth to thirteenth centuries. Many contemporary art styles have a surprising similarity to these truly Christian forms and seem to be new developments of that artistic tradition. Their principal concern is not

with physical but with metaphysical reality, so that the external appearance of things is as it were carved away by the artist's tools to let the spiritual essence emerge. If a mystic is depicted, the colors, lines and forms used will appropriately have a character which goes beyond natural appearances in order to express a supernatural state. Art speaks visually by means of selection and interpretation, not by duplication or reproduction. Literal depiction in art is comparable to journalism, whereas a selected, ordered, expressive art work would be analogous to poetry.

Knowing that the mysteries of God cannot be directly communicated, nor totally communicated, the Christian artist selects, emphasizes and draws forth certain facets of the truth he is depicting in order to reveal anew an eternal truth, a facet of eternal beauty freshly polished.

The "new" styles in Christian art can be seen not as truly new, but as a return, for the most part, to the idea-stressing and spiritual-minded manner of working which prevailed before the Renaissance style set emphasis on artistic technique and naturalistic appearances. Even before the experiments of modern psychology, the Church appreciated the fact that for the majority, environment was a formative factor, and surrounded her children with inspiring and truth-revealing art. If the index of holiness today were to be determined by its usual environment, it might seem that contemporary spirituality consists of false imitation, of weak sentimentality, of physical and material preoccupation or of reproduction of a past glory. A survey of holy cards in a prayer book might reveal that spiritual nourishment is being conditioned by subjective piety and confused theology.

Sacred art can function as a tool, an instrument helping to form Christ in the soul, helping to prepare it for ready responses to grace, intensifying its savor for the Absolute, for ultimate possession of the Beatific Vision, when "we shall be like to him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). Overcoming the influence of stale and weak art will probably take a generation, but the task needs to begin now. The first step is to be open-minded towards works and efforts which strive to go beyond the mediocre. Another step is not to condemn that which is not understood, not to judge by a natural or material standard works which strive to express a supernatural or spiritual concept. Association with good contem-

porary works is perhaps the best way of opening the way to grasping their communication. Many experience that frequent association with good, penetrating works, even in reproduction if necessary, is the most effective way of becoming aware of the inadequacy of objects which have little to offer beyond a surface prettiness. However, much benefit comes also from training in design and art.

Christians are meant to begin living the divinizing life while on earth, to perceive intimations of the anticipated vision of Beauty. As St. Paul points out, "Since the creation of the world his invisible attributes are clearly seen — his everlasting power also and divinity — being understood through the things that are made" (Romans 1:20). The relation of a visual grasp of beauty and spiritual satisfaction is not to be denied. St. Thomas says that beauty is that which when seen pleases. In the writing of Abbot Marmion one often encounters references to the complacency of the Father in the Son, i. e., the Father's pleasure in the beauty He sees in the Son. It is a Christian's supernatural birthright to begin that pleasing and beautifying vision now. So with open eyes and open minds it is possible to see all vestiges of the beauty of God in the universe, including man's expression of God's beauty in art.

St. Benedict's Convent

SISTER JOHANNA, O.S.B.

St. Joseph, Minnesota

QUEEN OF THE MOST HOLY ROSARY

A ROSARY, in the literal sense of the word, designates a place or garden of roses. Most fittingly is this term applied to the well known prayer which we call the Rosary. In this garden are blooming the roses of our Queen's heavenly virtues; here we can drink from rivers of grace and breathe in the pure and invigorating atmosphere of the supernatural. No wonder that our Lady, at Lourdes and at Fatima, appears with the Rosary and urges its use; she wants us, her children, to learn from her. Through the Rosary we not only acquire a deeper knowledge of the life of Jesus and Mary, but we are also aroused to holy love and imitation.

JOYFUL MYSTERIES

The very name which we give to the first five Mysteries of the Rosary speaks of the peace and happiness that comes from

intimate converse with God. God is the God of joy and where He is there can be no sadness.

Heavenly peace dwells in the little home of Nazareth, where the chosen daughter of Juda blooms in solitary beauty before the God of Israel. Gabriel, the Power of God, delivers to her the divine message, for which heaven and earth had been praying and waiting for thousands of years. She shall bring forth a Son — the Son of the Most High. Mary, the humble handmaid of the Lord, bows to the will of God; she accepts the offer. So the Holy Spirit takes possession of her for the designs of His love and, under the shadow of His power, the Word is made flesh in her immaculate womb.

If St. Paul can say that the love of Christ is urging him, does not the same love urge the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, the chosen Mother of Christ? Mary hastens to Elizabeth; love knows no obstacles, as St. Ambrose says. And the effects of this visit are that the Precursor is sanctified and Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit; Mary, too, filled with the Holy Spirit, sees the first rays of light and love issuing from her divine Son into the world and from the depth of her heart wells forth her queenly *Magnificat*.

In Bethlehem of Juda, by no means the least significant of Juda's cities, the Virgin, of whom Isaias spoke, gives birth to the Savior of the world. Salvation will come if the motto of Mary's Son, announced by angels in that ever memorable night, will be accepted as the motto of mankind: *Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will*.

- Jesus Christ is the Anointed One, destined from all eternity to be the Priest and Victim of the Sacrifice for the world's salvation. Mary hastens to the Temple to present Him for this purpose to the Lord. And though, as time will pass, the sword of sorrow will pierce her heart, as foretold by Simeon, she will keep close to Jesus, even beneath the Cross.

The Son of God, spoken of by the prophet as the great servant of God, must be about His Father's business, without any regard for flesh and blood. He remains in the Temple, knowing all the while that His beloved Mother's heart is bleeding. Mary endures the sorrow of mankind that has lost its God, but she rejoices that through her sorrow men will find their God again.

There are joyful mysteries in the Christian life unknown to the world. We are temples of the Holy Spirit, tabernacles of our

Eucharistic Savior after holy Communion. He who is the Light of the world is within us by grace and faith and we are to let that light shine so that men may see it. Daily the Mystery of Christmas night is reenacted upon our altars reminding us of our life's task: to give glory to God, in order to secure for ourselves the peace promised to men of good will. Through baptism and the religious vows we were consecrated to the service of God to be victims — living, holy, pleasing unto God, notwithstanding the pain which the sacrifice will inflict. And in life's lonely hours we know that God has not forsaken us, but tests our loyalty. He must be served, not because of His sweet consolations, but because He is our Lord.

SORROWFUL MYSTERIES

Life is filled with many miseries, as the inspired writer of the Old Testament says. Christ demands as the proof of love that we take our cross upon ourselves and follow Him. In the *Salve Regina* we pray as exiles in this valley of tears. The Christian must learn to love the Cross. The sorrowful Mysteries reveal to us its glory. In the Cross there is salvation, life, and resurrection.

Mental sufferings are severer than bodily pain. They are manifold in the life of the Christian and may arise from countless sources. Christ endured them before us; on Mount Olivet we see Him in His agony, trembling, crushed, sweating blood at the sight of the approaching Passion and men's ingratitude and malice. Yet He is resigned to the will of the Father, "My Father, if this cup cannot pass away unless I drink it, thy will be done."

Sufferings of the soul are greater than those of the body, because the soul had a greater share in the guilt of sin. However, the body too shared in sin and enjoyed its unlawful pleasure, especially in the sins of intemperance and impurity. Hence the body, too, must share in the atonement of sin. We see it in the scourging of our blessed Savior, who has taken upon Himself the punishment of our sin. But we must fill up in our bodies what is as yet wanting to the Passion of Christ (Col. 1:24). Well for us, if in sickness and bodily pain we remember the significance of the scourging.

Pride is the beginning of all sin, the proximate cause of the majority of personal sins. It is the refusal to bow to the will of God. The proper punishment of pride is humiliation. Therefore our Savior humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the most ignominious death on a Cross. In the humiliations of the

crowning with thorns He makes atonement for the pride of men. He is mocked in all that He is, in His Divinity and royal dignity, and in all the good that He has done. Shall we ever have reason to complain of humiliations in the presence of our thorn-crowned King?

Flight from the Cross is characteristic of our days, the desire and effort to escape all pain, hardship, responsibility. Jesus atones for it by carrying His heavy Cross. As He allowed Simon the Cyrenian to help Him carry His Cross, so He calls us to do the same service to Him by carrying our cross with patience and joy. Will it ever be too hard, if we remember that it is a splinter from the Cross of Christ?

St. Paul speaks of being nailed to the Cross together with Christ. This is an appealing characterization of the Christian's loyalty to Christ to the end. Christ remains hanging on the Cross until all is finished, His Father's will fulfilled to the last detail. And in the midst of all His suffering He harbors no feelings of resentment or revenge against His enemies, unjust accusers and judges and tormentors, but prays for them and offers them His blessings. Here we behold the summit of Christian perfection. Such selfless, forgiving, generous love presents the true likeness of Christ.

The sorrowful mysteries are found in the life of every true follower of Christ. It is a way of the Cross. Through agony of mind and body, through humiliations patiently borne, through fidelity in carrying the burdens of life, through death to self and to the world he must atone for sin, conform to the image of Christ, and through conformity prove his claim to the glory of the life everlasting.

GLORIOUS MYSTERIES

If the sorrows of Jesus and Mary are great as the sea in the sorrowful mysteries, greater yet are the honors and joys that have come to them through the glorious Mysteries.

Death is the passage to life. The tomb cannot hold the Conqueror of death and sin; He rises in glorious immortality. O Death, where is thy victory; O Death, where is thy sting? Wonderful are the consolations which the Resurrection of our Lord brings to His friends. As in His, so in their case pain shall be followed by delight, humiliation by glory, weakness by power, defeat by vic-

tory. The triumph of the Resurrection is the completion of the Christian life; without the former, the latter would be an anomaly. Always remember that Christ is risen from the dead.

Heaven, not earth, is the permanent abode of His risen Body. The day of the Ascension arrives. How profoundly significant that it should take place on Mount Olivet, the place that witnessed the beginning of His Passion now witnessing His triumph. He rises into space, disappears from the sight of His friends. But henceforth heaven is in their hearts. So we are to mind the things that are above, where Christ is at the right hand of the Father.

As the Holy Spirit stands at the beginning of the life of Christ in the Mystery of the Incarnation, so He stands at the beginning of the Church, Christ's Mystical Body, that will relive the life of Christ to the end of days. As He fructified Mary's virginity, so He bestows fecundity upon the Church, that she may bring forth a new generation created in justice and true holiness. The Holy Spirit crowns the work of Jesus in the sanctification of souls. Do we allow ourselves to be enlightened by the light and warmed by the warmth of His fiery tongues, so as to be a crown of honor for our Savior?

The days of Christ's blessed Mother came to an end. She had suffered the pangs of death beneath the Cross of her dying Son; now she departs from this life in an ecstasy of love. She dies in order to conform in everything to her divine Son, but her body shall not be a prey of corruption. On the feast of All Saints, 1950, Pope Pius XII defined the dogma of the bodily Assumption of our Blessed Mother. She, as the first of all redeemed, is to enjoy the complete victory of Christ over sin and death. At the end of time we too shall rise. Do we prepare our body for a glorious resurrection?

And now for all eternity Mary is enthroned in queenly majesty next to her divine Son. She is the great Sign that has appeared in heaven, the woman clothed with the sun, the moon at her feet, a crown of twelve stars upon her head. For all eternity she will rule in the heavenly Kingdom by the authority conferred upon her by Christ the King, Her loving, grateful Son. But she is Queen likewise of all the members of the Church Militant, our Queen; she will lead us to victory and to the heavenly Kingdom if we follow her leadership.

These glorious Mysteries must have their place in the Christian life. Without them we would be, in words of the Apostle, the most miserable of men. Life's struggles and sorrows will not last forever; soon they will be over, after the few years of this short life of ours, and then heaven is ours forever. Thus these Mysteries are a powerful call from on high to rise to a new life of true spirituality, to mind the things that are above, to live by the Holy Spirit, to look for the day when we too shall rise from the dead and with our bodily eyes behold our Mother and Queen, our life, our sweetness and our hope — to rejoice and to give thanks without end. *Magnificat*, My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, forever.

These are beautiful lessons that we learn through the Rosary mysteries. Even though our heavenly Mother is not expressly mentioned in all of them, she is there inseparably united with her divine Son, with all her soul entering into the mind of Jesus conforming to His will and His sentiments. She is our teacher. In the epistle of the feast of the most holy Rosary she addresses to us her motherly promise and exhortation, "Now, therefore, ye children, hear me: blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me and that watcheth daily at my gates, and waiteth at the posts of my doors. He that shall find me, shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord."

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SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND PERFECTION (II)

GOOD WORKS

SINCE good works are a means of grace, they are a means of spiritual growth and progress towards perfection. In every good work there is found a threefold value:

1. A *meritorious value* which, from the dignity of the work, gives us a right to a reward.

2. A *satisfactory value* by which our offenses committed against God are more or less repaired and, at least, part of the temporal punishment due to sin is remitted; and

3. An *impetratory value* by which God, due to His great generosity, is inclined to bestow gifts to us (Herve, *Manuale Theologiae Dogmaticae*, Vol. 3, p. 227). As we will see, we are concerned here primarily with the meritorious value of a good work, since this is a vital matter in spiritual growth.

Obviously spiritual growth or progress can be either slow or fast; thus it can be accelerated if the *proper* factors are present. This brings us naturally to the problem of *spiritual efficiency* and the *stepping up* of spiritual growth, which is basically a matter of merit.

In this matter of good works there are two important factors to consider: 1. The various kinds of good works; and 2. How merit for our individual good works is intensified.

In the matter of good works we will find those that are *purely spiritual* and those which we might call *humane*. The *purely spiritual* can be either for *our own* self-improvement or for the improvement of *others*. Spiritual works primarily for *our own* improvement include such works as mental and liturgical prayer, spiritual reading, examination of conscience, and our own private prayers. True, by directing our intentions we can give to these an apostolic turn. Spiritual works for the improvement of *others* include such things as preaching, giving spiritual conferences and retreats, teaching catechism, writing and other works of zeal.

Humane good works may be considered under these three division: 1. *intellectual*, 2. *manual*, and 3. *recreational*. Such good works as study, teaching, research work, administrative duties, and advisory work are clear-cut examples of *intellectual* good works which, while demanding a certain amount of physical exertion, primarily require the use of the mind. We look upon *manual* work here as work which, while demanding use of the mind, primarily requires muscular and physical exertion. Under this heading will come such things as farming, shopwork, janitor service, cleaning and housework.

Finally, there are humane works which are *recreational*; the purpose of these is exactly that of the root meaning of the word *recreational*: a rebuilding of the mind and body or, to use the famous phrase of Pope Pius XI, "*mens sana in corpore sano* - a healthy mind in a healthy body."

Since recreational pursuits are necessary for a healthy mind and body, they are also obviously good works. These recreational pursuits include such things as playing or watching games, travelling, visiting relatives and friends, friendly conversation with others, attending movies, light reading, eating, and sleeping.

Such things as sickness, sorrow and other mental moods or states, while difficult to classify, clearly come under good works. In fact Father Plus says of the three apostolates, prayer, action, and suffering, that the latter is the most efficacious.

The next point that presents itself here is how are we to marshal these many and various pursuits or good works in our daily lives.

Surely, in this vast number of human pursuits there is clearly a hierarchy of good works and some are more excellent than others. Some saints as St. Therese, Blessed Claude de la Columbiere and St. Margaret Mary, were so impressed with the difference of the inherent worth of different good works, that they took a vow to choose habitually the more perfect. Really, one of the great secrets of the saints was their combined ability and determination to make wise and excellent choices in this matter of good works. Surely, other things being equal, it is better to attend an extra Mass than to play a game of cards, if I don't need this latter recreation. But we must be reasonable and prudent, and a wise person here is one who knows how to blend properly the various pursuits. In the concrete, he is one who properly blends spiritual, intellectual, manual, and recreational pursuits in his daily life. This proper blending keeps mental strain and physical fatigue out of his life. It prevents what it called "wasting time", which is a pursuing of one or another of these good works imprudently or beyond measure of discretion. The net result here is that we are damaged or rendered less efficient either spiritually or physically or both. Thus, if we indulge in recreational pursuits beyond reasonable needs, we are wasting time, since *in themselves* recreational pursuits have less inherent value than other pursuits. Here then is involved a *spiritual loss*.

On the other hand, at times when we are mentally or physically fatigued, it is more perfect to engage in recreational pursuits than in others, even in the purely spiritual ones. As was said above, the secret is a proper blending of these various pursuits. Where

there is a lack of a proper blending of the spiritual, intellectual, manual, and recreational, sooner or later there will be observed a lessening of our spiritual efficiency and a compromising of our spiritual growth.

Obviously, all these pursuits, even the recreational, can be supernatural or meritorious as long as they are: 1. good in themselves, 2. done for some supernatural motive(s), and 3. done by us while in the state of grace.

The supernatural merit we get for them can be intensified by the degree of fervor and charity whereby we do them and by our degree of sanctifying grace. Hence we should try to do all we do with great care, perfection, fervor of charity, and great purity of motives.

Such factors as the duration of a task, its inherent difficulty, and its vastness can also increase the merit we receive for actions. Hence other things being equal, it would be more meritorious to give one hundred dollars for alms than ten, to fast five days rather than one, and live on bread and water for a day rather than merely to abstain from butter.

Here, then, we have seen that the amount of sanctifying grace we have is the measure of our perfection and that the chief means of growing in it are the reception of the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist and the performance of good works. We have tried to set forth the optimum conditions for getting the most out of these Sacraments and our good works, so that our growth in sanctifying grace and, consequently, in Christian perfection may be proportionately accelerated.

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LEST WE FORGET THE RETREAT

(Read slowly and reflect after each paragraph.)

The convent door bell rang. The guest Sister opened the door. There stood a priest. She had seen him before. "I'm so sorry, Sister," he said. "I gave your retreat last year and now I've been sent to give it again. Father Provincial was going to send another, but there was a change of plans at the last moment, and so he sent me. I know it would be nice if you could have a stranger, but..." "Oh, that's

all right, Father," the little Sister said with a welcoming smile. "Come right in and don't you worry." And with all the childlike simplicity that characterizes the charitable nun, she added assuringly: "We don't remember a thing you told us last year." So lest we forget, here are some of the things to remember.

First Day. A person who really grows in holiness and is a saint does not know he is a saint. The holier he becomes, the nearer he approaches to God, the more keenly he realizes that he is a sinner and not a saint.

When I die, there may be a priest, a doctor, confreres, others around me—perhaps not—but, nevertheless, I must do my own dying. No one can do that for me. So, too, I must do my own living. It is up to me to save my soul.

One act of my free will gives God more glory than would be given Him by the forced service of all creation. This explains, too, why one act of free service here serves to expiate what otherwise may require long years in Purgatory, where the punishment is not freely undertaken.

We know how the Trappists go to the very limits of renunciation. During a retreat some of those priests came to the retreat master's room and asked with tears in their eyes whether he thought they would be saved. Salvation was the one thing that was ever in their mind—salvation, which means the final and absolute possession of God. And you?

You want God, and nothing else will ever satisfy you. If God were to give you a whole star for your very own, you would not be satisfied. You would not be satisfied with all creation. You want and must have the Creator Himself.

In heaven there will be no saint just like you. God makes each one just the kind of saint He wants each one to be. St Teresa said that she would gladly suffer all the pains of this earth until the day of judgment for the least increase in heavenly glory.

You are but human. You, too, may commit the sins that so many others are committing. Do not say: "I will immediately make an act of perfect contrition and be reconciled with God." After the total and absolute break with God which is mortal sin, it takes some time to get into the disposition for an act of perfect contrition—and the help of God! Will you have the time? Many thought so but had it not. They died immediately afterwards and went to hell.

Some religious thought, when they were young, that after sixty they would no longer have those temptations. But after sixty they, too, had to say: "I now see that one will be safe only one second after one's death."

"Simon," said the Savior, "I have something to say to you." With Simon answer: "Say it, Lord." But add: "Don't say it when I am absent, dear Lord, but say it when I am present. Say it when we are together.

And it is my prayer that we always be together." And the Lord says: "They took both good and bad fish in the net. The good fish were kept but the bad fish were cast away. Do you understand these things?"

Second Day. Try to love God more. Be sorry for your sins because you love Him. My God, I am sorry because I love Thee who art so infinitely good.

A young woman, on the day before her wedding was to take place, noticed some white scars on her arm. Consulting a doctor, she found it was leprosy. At once she was taken to a leper asylum to spend the rest of her life there. Each day she wrote something down in her diary. One of her last notes was something like this: "Here I sit behind prison bars, the flesh dropping from my limbs, waiting for my soul to leave my body and go to God."

Now I am going to the closet and take out my baptismal robe and look it over. What a robe! Once it was so white and utterly spotless. Now it has many spots, large and small. It is my own robe. No one else stained it. I will often take it out and look at it and be sorry.

God made the oceans and they stayed there. He made the mountains and they stood at attention. Every cloud that sails through the sky is sailing under orders. All creation obeys the Creator—all except man, except me. Yes, indeed, why does not all creation rise up and annihilate me? "O God, be merciful to me a sinner!"

Practice self-denial, chiefly by keeping the rules—all of them, and always, and as perfectly as possible. If you do not deny yourself and discipline yourself of your own free will, God will do so. And when God touches the mountain it smokes! He may tie you down to a bed of pain and humiliation for years. Who are the unhappy, dissatisfied members of a community? Those who do not practice self-denial, who do not keep the rules. Those who do not practice mortification are a selfish lot.

So there is a fellow religious who hates you? Practice self-denial. Hate yourself. Then both of you hate the same miserable thing and there can be no conflict.

The meditation on hell is most salutary. How it fills the soul with holy fear of God, makes one resolve never to commit a mortal sin, urges one on to the practice of mortification, causes one to strive with might and main to save as many souls from hell as possible.

What a terrible thought is the thought of a religious in hell. What shame and confusion will fill the soul. Think of the company. In the midst of it the religious will stand condemned forever, an object of derision, at the whipping post, so to speak, the scorn of all the damned souls in hell.

St. Theresa of Avila was taken down into hell for an instant and saw in it the place that had been prepared for her, had she not left her vain ways. Six years afterwards, when writing about that vision,

she said that the very thought of that terrible experience made her blood run cold. "Holy Mary, save us from the pains of hell!"

A religious house where silence is not observed reminds one of hell, where there is disorder and all are speaking at the same time. Nor can there be progress in virtue in such a house. There are some religious who say the retreat master should tone down on hell, or simply drop that meditation. They are the very ones who need it most.

Third Day. "What time is it now?" the sick man asked almost every half hour of that long night, as I sat by his bedside. What time is it now in my life? How long am I going to live? Some people are always living in the past; others live in the future; so many are never at home—are never living in the present. That is what matters. God is a God of the present. The present moment counts. But to live in the eternal present, with no past, no future, with an eternal God, means perfect self-forgetfulness in the memory. Try it.

We do not know when we are going to die. Some are sickly and think they are going to die soon and yet live on and on, like the young religious who was told that he had only two months to live, wrote letters of farewell to all, and then lived to celebrate his sixtieth anniversary of religious profession. Others think they will live long, and they die early, like the most athletic man of a class of religious, who was the first of that group to die.

A dying nun held up her crucifix and said, with all truth: "This is all I have." Some religious die, and when one goes to their room to dispose of their things, there isn't anything in the whole place that is even fit to give to the poor. What a fine way to leave this world—having first left all other things.

There was the boy at the Jesuit school in Prairie du Chien some years ago. He was taken to the infirmary sick unto death in reality, though he was not told so. Shortly afterwards he said to the Brother Infirmaryman: "Get out my best clothes, Brother; I'm going away at half past eight tomorrow." Upon inquiry, he said that three men had come and told him they would call for him at that time. The Brother then had the boy point out the men—from a picture of a group of saints hanging on the wall. Just to humor the boy, the Brother brought his best suit the next morning and dressed him in it. At exactly half past eight, the lad leaned forward with eager and enraptured eyes and then fell back on his pillow dead.

Fourth Day. By way of elimination we find that there is no other place to go except to the Divine Savior and to heaven. "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." But it were wholly unworthy of us to go to Christ merely because there is no other place to go. We should be filled with zeal to become like unto Him, truly other Christs, according to the words: "This is eternal life, that they may know thee, the one true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

When, in the matter of obedience, we take our eyes off the Person of Christ and regard the person of the Superior, the trouble begins. Remember, "Who hears you, hears me." Remember, too, that God does not need us for anything. Through obedience He merely gives us a glorious chance. Through this interior surrender of my will and judgment I make every moment of my life most meritorious, even my sleeping at night.

I would rather obey the lowest, meanest Superior than the greatest, grandest archangel. I know about the Superior that he takes Christ's place but I do not know whether the archangel has been so delegated.

Suppose you are told to go and clean a room. God does not need you to clean a room. He could send a legion of angels to clean it. The interior surrender of your will is what God wants. Never doubt that what you do out of obedience will turn out well. It's got to turn out well, with Christ back of the whole thing!

As regards permissions, if you want something, ask for it. Be honest. Not one Superior that I ever met likes to say no. Everyone likes to say yes. But sometimes Superiors simply must say no.

The joy of the perfect consecration to the Blessed Virgin is that our Lady takes our prayers and removes from them all distractions and imperfections and thus presents them most pleasing to the Lord. But that is only one joy. Think of liberty of spirit—and of the others. What a grand thing it is, for instance, to have a religious who can keep still and go!

Jesus is born at Bethlehem. Put your ear to that stable door and listen. What do you hear inside? Nothing. That was the first religious community. Religious silence was perfectly observed. Religious silence is of the utmost importance. One who does not observe it is not a spiritual man—and that's all there's to it!

Fifth Day. The Presentation of our Lord in the Temple reminds us over and over again that everything was done *according to the Law*. Our law is our rule book. The religious who keeps the rules perfectly will attain to eminent sanctity. To keep each and every rule day after day means the practice of heroic virtue. That was the only thing for which St. John Berchmans was canonized.

We do not rely enough upon Divine Providence. We do not give God half the trust we should give Him. We place so little reliance upon God's loving care of us. "God will provide," is an old-fashioned saying in many a religious house in our day.

Some religious go about as if they were going to the gallows. Be cheerful! Others absent themselves from the community and give themselves to their prayers and devotions and almost go crazy "seeking the Lord." Then finally they come back to the community—and find Christ there. There He is in the midst of them, of course. He was

there all the while. In India a group of missionaries went out for a walk. They were all safe while they stayed together. But one lingered behind. A man-eating tiger had been waiting just for that. Suddenly he pounced upon the lonely one and carried him off. He was never seen again.

A man is clawed by a beast. I find him and bring him in and take care of him with all sympathy. A man is clawed by the hellish beast. I turn away in disgust and say: "Look at that dirty fellow!" What love we should have for sinners, while hating the sin. We are each other's fellow sinners.

Oh the power of one little word, a yes or no, for instance, for good or evil! Said the missionary: "I was sent out for Christmas, the pastor of a big parish being sick. All day long for the three preceding days I heard confessions. All Christmas Eve, up to the midnight Mass. I was weary unto death. Again and again I looked out to see if any more were coming. Finally, I got out and got as far as the porch, when a lady came and asked me to please hear one more confession, her brother's. He had not been to confession for 40 years; she had been praying for his conversion for 40 years. By one word I could have nullified the prayers of 40 years. Thank God that I did not utter it!"

Sixth Day. It is about time to make my big resolution of this retreat. What is it going to be? How about this: "I will always live in the present, not in the past nor yet in the future, but in the present. I will thus do what I do right here and now. That will at once eliminate most of those distractions in my prayers. God and I are alone in the world now. I will *love God now!*"

There are some religious who spend so and so much money without permission and hence fail against poverty. Then they want to know whether this or that sum was a mortal sin or not, being eager to remain within a few cents of mortal sin, but not at all solicitous to excel in the perfect observance of poverty. For shame! Then the retreat master had a dream: seven of the Sisters in the retreat had been told that they could go to summer school, if they would get the money for it themselves. What a notion of religious poverty! One even had \$600 in the bank. So the retreat master laid down the law to them: "Get out of this chapel here and get out of the convent, if that is the kind of religious you are!" The result of his fiery zeal for poverty was that they all stayed and reformed, even the one who was about to go to summer school, who already had her high-heeled shoes, her finger nail polish, and all that. Or *was* it a dream? What an example of strange practices in the observance of poverty!

It may be that you are struggling with a three-headed monster we might call SSS, hissing, elusive heads on long necks attached to a serpentine body: selfishness, sensitiveness, sensuality. This sensuality always seeks its own comfort; this sensitiveness is always being

hurt and offended and slighted; this selfishness is everlastingly seeking its own way about things. When you try to grab one head to cut it off, you find that the three are so intermingled that you cannot grasp anything. Best thing is to cut off the neck of the serpentine body, to cut the heads off at the root of pride, with the knife of humility.

Seventh Day. Remember the message sent to the Savior by Martha and Mary concerning Lazarus: "Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick." What a prayer! How brief. How sufficient. Thus we can recommend others to the Master—no particulars, no requests in detail. He is God; God is our Father. And those who have made the total consecration to our Lady need but turn trusting eyes to her and say: "I am all thine, sweet Mother, with all that I am and all that I have. You take care of him (of her, of this matter)." When I am sick, that shall be my prayer also. They will know what to do.

The Apostles were asleep. To be weary, to fall asleep during spiritual exercises is not a matter for discouragement, but a matter for humility.

Try to be imbued with the thought of the Real Presence that is there in the tabernacle—a Presence that, it is not too much to say, ought to make us walk on tiptoes in the house under whose roof He is. *Jesus is here.* And when in the church or chapel, concentrate on Him. Do not attend to anything else, unless it is a matter of duty. Jesus is looking at you. He has been waiting long; now you have come; what are you going to say to Him and let Him say to you?

The father of a family is captured by the enemy in war and is sentenced to die the next day. During the night a friend enters his cell and says: "Change clothes with me and go free. I will be shot in the morning for you." So it is done. On the morrow the friend dies. What an heroic deed! That is what Christ did for you. "He loved me and delivered himself for me." Or a man who has worked all his life for his little home cannot now pay the debt on it. It is going to be taken away, sold; he must leave. A neighbor comes and says: "You will not have to leave. The home is yours. I have paid the debt." That is what Christ did. He paid the debt—I would like to take down that Body of Christ and place it in your arms. There it is, signed, sealed, and stamped *paid*. Your redemption. Now go and sin no more!

Eighth Day. Perhaps your big resolution is too big, too generous; you may not be able to keep it. If you find, upon further consideration, that it is indeed so, change it to something else forthwith. However, it often happens that we do not divide in order to conquer. Suppose you were never keeping religious silence and that was making your religious observance nil. So now you are going to keep silence at all times when it should be kept, and in all places where it should be

kept, and in the manner in which it should be kept. But you feel you can't do it. Begin by keeping it, let us say, (1) before breakfast and after night prayers, (2) in the refectory, (3) in the corridors, (4) in your room, by not doing useless visiting. Thus take one place and one time after the other. Then you can soon keep silence everywhere without too much trouble, if you are resolved to be mortified.

Offer it up once and for all, *as an act of obedience* to the rules that command silence and quiet in the house, for the adornment of the convent and the edification of the members, and hence *as a constant source of merit*, every time you close the door quietly, every time you tread lightly (every soft footfall!), every time you speak in a whisper or in a very low tone so as not to disturb in any way, every time you blow your nose without noise, every time you make that sneeze more subdued, that cough less loud. But not just once and for all. No, frequently during the day, as you close the door quietly, etc., say in your heart, "Out of obedience to the rule, dear Savior," or something like that. What treasures you will then heap up for heaven. "But this is going a little too far," you say. Is it, really? Did you not make some sacred promise "according to the Constitutions"? Silence is fundamental, and where it is not observed everything goes to pieces.

A prominent layman who entered the Church some time ago gave this as his reason. He was in a Catholic hospital and from where he lay in bed he could see the office of the hospital. Every day he saw a certain Sister come to that office at stated times and stay there on duty. Day after day he watched her, noting the look of calm and peace and recollection and patience on that face, despite the fact that she had all kinds of callers at the office and all kinds of problems to solve. The non-Catholic layman said to himself that the faith which could give one such peace of heart and imperturbable serenity must be the true faith. He then and there resolved to investigate further through the taking of instructions in the Catholic religion. The result was that he entered the Church. That Sister never knew that she was bearing constant witness to Christ and converting a soul.

Go now, and keep your good resolves. And may this prayer accompany you and be with you daily: "O Holy Spirit, Soul of my soul, I adore Thee. Enlighten, guide, strengthen, and console me. Tell me what I ought to do and command me to do it. I promise to be submissive in everything that Thou permittest to happen to me, only show me what is Thy will. O Most Holy Trinity, living by Thy grace in my soul, I adore Thee. O Most Holy Trinity, living by Thy grace in my soul, make me love Thee more and more. O Most Holy Trinity, living by Thy grace in my soul, sanctify me more and more. Abide with me, Lord; be my true joy."

The last word of the retreat: "Abide in My love" (John 15:9).

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WINFRID HERBST, S.D.S.

LIBRARY NOTES

Barbe Acarie. *Wife and Mystic. A Biography* by Lancelot C. Sheppard. Burns Oates, London, England. 1953. Pp. xi-210. Cloth \$3.50.

Barbe Acarie, honored by the Church under the title "Blessed Mary of the Incarnation", was a remarkable woman. Married before she was seventeen to a gay, good-looking Frenchman, who got himself too unwisely involved in politics, she proved a devoted wife, the mother of six children, four of whom dedicated their lives to God. Their mother's attitude toward their entry into religious life is indicated in a statement cited by her biographer:

"If I had but one child and if I were the queen of the whole world so that he was my sole heir and God called him to the religious state I would put no obstacle in his way; but if I had a hundred children and could make no provision for them I would not oblige one to enter religion, because such a vocation must come purely from God. The religious state is so lofty that the whole world together cannot make a good religious if God does not lend his help; it is far better to remain in the world by divine disposition than to be a religious through human instigation."

Mme. Acarie's esteem for the religious life is further reflected in the unflagging zeal and energy she showed in founding or assisting in the foundation of religious houses. Until she left it to become a Carmelite lay-Sister, her home was a veritable religious salon, with the outstanding clerical figures of the day frequenting it constantly.

At a time when prevailing tendencies all pointed to greater emphasis on mental prayer, this saintly woman maintained a balanced outlook, as is reflected in her reaction to a vision she had; in it St. Teresa told her that as a reward for introducing the Carmelites into France she would one day enter the Order as a lay-Sister.

"Barbe was somewhat disturbed at this vision... although, in all humility, she appreciated the lowliness of the position as a lay-Sister, she felt a certain repugnance to it because it would deprive her of the Divine Office. She was greatly attached to singing the praises of God and to be barred from the choir was to take away from the religious life, in her view, one of its essential elements."

Lay people should be indebted to the author of this biographical study for the pains he takes to show how this unusual woman

achieved sanctity in the married state, and religious cannot fail to be inspired by the sanity of her holiness. A.B.M.

I Want To See God. A Practical Synthesis of Carmelite Spirituality. By P. Marie-Eugene, O.C.D. Translated by Sister M. Verda Clare, C.S.C. Fides Publishers Association, 21 W. Superior, Chicago, Illinois. 1953. xxii-549 pages, cloth \$5.75.

I Want To See God is the title of a two-volume work of a French Carmelite Father, and rendered into English by Sister Verda Clare, C.S.C. Only the first volume is off the press, while the second is in preparation. The translation is excellently done. The book itself is an analysis of the doctrine of St. Teresa of Avila. It is not exactly a running commentary on her writings, but quotations from all the works abound on almost every page. It is an orderly presentation, following in general the *Interior Castle and Mansions of the Soul*. This is a story of the development of the prayer-life, as well as an exposition of the characteristic virtues of each stage.

The author gives a generous foundation of theological principles along the way, and shows the relation of St. Teresa's teaching to them. There are further reflections on the nature of the Christian spiritual life.

Instructive are the chapters on Silence, Spiritual Reading, Mortification, Spiritual Direction and the like. Particularly helpful will be the sections on Meditation, how to make a simple meditation, how to converse with Christ our Lord, and be led on to recollection. All in all, it is a fine study of the Spanish Foundress, as well for initiates to her writings as for those better acquainted.

FR. GABRIEL, O.F.M.CAP

Holy Rosary. By Msgr. J. M. Escriva. Scepter Press, 5544 Woodlawn Avenue, Chicago 37, Illinois. 1953. 157 pages, cloth \$2.50 each; 2 or more, 20% discount; 5 or more 40% discount.

Holy Rosary, originally published in Spanish, is a book of short meditations on the Rosary, each one related to some vital point in our own spiritual life. Yet, because these meditations are written with simplicity, the superficial reader may think them rather shallow. The designs are good, but the illustrations are poor. If the book were in pamphlet form, it could be sold cheaply and reach many more readers. S.C.



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and sleep in the sleep
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